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## CHECHEN SUICIDE BOMBERS

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*U.S. military commanders and others in the defense community are concerned that militant Chechens, trained in suicide bombing and extremist tactics, are available to support Taliban elements in Afghanistan today. In reality, the relationship between these two groups is minimal and there is little likelihood of substantive cooperation between them. This position becomes clear after a brief review of Chechnya's history regarding Islam, its extremist groups, and its chronology of suicide bombings.*

**“A suicide bomber is neither suicidal nor a typical bomber . . . he is a self-bombing murderer.”**

*—Anonymous*

In early 2006, Taliban spokesman Mohammad Hanif claimed there were up to 250 *fidayeen* (dedicated soldiers) prepared to conduct suicide attacks, and that the number was increasing daily.<sup>1</sup> Roughly two months later, Taliban commander Mullah Razayar Noorzai stated his organization had prepared 600 suicide bombers to fight against coalition forces in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> By the end of 2006, suicide bombers had killed more than 200 people in Afghanistan, up from only single digit figures in 2004.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Scott Baldauf, “Taliban Turn to Suicide Attacks,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 February 2006, <<http://www.csmonitor.com>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).

<sup>2</sup>Massoud Ansari, “I have 600 Suicide Bombers Waiting for Your Soldiers,” *Telegraph*, 25 March 2006, <<http://www.Telegraph.co.uk>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).

<sup>3</sup>“Suicide Bomber Follows Quran,” *World Daily Net*, 27 September 2006, <<http://www.worldnetdaily.com>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).

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Given their similar religious influences and a common background in fighting Russian forces, one may be led to believe that Chechen suicide bombers are available to support Taliban elements in Afghanistan today. After all, Afghanistan was the only government in the world to recognize Chechnya as a state. In February 2000, the Chechen separatist government of President Aslan Maskhadov opened an embassy in Kabul. The rebels' chief ideologist, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, was appointed ambassador, purportedly to build up military cooperation between Chechen rebels and the Taliban.<sup>4</sup> Unconfirmed reporting over the years suggested the Taliban permitted a few dozen Chechen rebels to train in military camps on Afghan territory.<sup>5</sup>

The truth is there is little relationship between Chechen suicide bombers and Afghans, and there are distinct reasons for this in both regions. Foremost, Afghans themselves rarely carry out suicide bombings, as it is not a part of their culture or fighting tradition to use this tactic. Afghans will indeed fight to the death, perceiving this as an honorable deed; however, their warrior ethos does not normally include killing themselves deliberately. Additionally, unlike in Chechnya, female suicide bombers are extremely rare to non-existent in Afghanistan.

In Chechnya, suicide bombings have become increasingly frequent since 2000, and their perpetrators are more motivated by revenge, despair, and their drive for an independent state than by religious fundamentalism

<sup>4</sup>Nabi Abdullaev, "Are Chechens in Afghanistan?," *Moscow Times*, 14 December 2001, <<http://www.themoscowtimes.com>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).

<sup>5</sup>Nabi Abdullaev, "Chechens Fighting with the Taliban: Fact or Propaganda?" *Jamestown Foundation*, 31 January 2002, <<http://www.jamestown.org>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).



**Suicide Bombing in Chechnya**

or individual honor. They have few inherent cultural or political interests in operating within Afghanistan. At most, Chechen affiliation with suicide bombings in Afghanistan would be limited to Chechen trainers in Pakistan, where multiple sources indicate most of Afghanistan's suicide bombers were from.<sup>6</sup>

The key point here is that suicide bombers have significantly different motives and tactics — regardless of their common affiliation with Islam — depending on the region in which they operate. The following article outlines several key characteristics of Chechen suicide attacks, discusses the background of this tactic in Chechnya, and addresses its differences from that in other regions. The article also provides the names of known Chechen terrorist organizations capable of sponsoring suicide attacks, and lists a chronology of these acts of violence to date.

### **KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS**

Chechen-related suicide attacks did not begin until 2000 (there were no Chechen-related suicide bombings in the first Chechen War, 1994–1996). The highest concentration of suicide attacks was in the summer of 2003, following a Chechen constitutional referendum and after suicide bombings garnered international headlines in Iraq. The second largest concentration was in the summer of 2000, when Chechen separatists used trucks filled with explosives to attack military targets in Chechnya.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>"Afghan Suicide Bombers Directly Linked to Pakistani Camps," *The Fourth Rail*, 4 October 2006, <<http://billroggio.com>> (Accessed 8 January 2007); also: Omid Marzban, "The Foreign Makeup of Afghan Suicide Bombers," *Jamestown Foundation – Global Terrorism Analysis*, 21 February 2006, <<http://www.jamestown.org>> (Accessed 8 January 2007).

<sup>7</sup>Anne Speckhard and Khapta Ahkmedova, "The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 29, Number 5, July–August 2006, 3–5, <<http://www.annespeckhard.com>> (Accessed 21 December 2006).



The most common tactic among Chechen suicide attacks has been to drive Russian military trucks, filled with explosives, into or next to the target just before detonation. The second most common method has been the use of the suicide belt. Packed with plastic explosives, hand grenades, and/or TNT, these devices are also typically filled with nuts, bolts, metal strips, and/or ball bearings to inflict maximum casualties. In addition to these two methods, suicide attackers have used smaller vehicles and bags filled with explosives.<sup>8</sup>

The majority of Chechen suicide bombings have targeted those whom Chechen separatists consider combatants — primarily military and government assets in and around Chechnya. While logistical restraints may inhibit some separatists from committing suicide attacks in far locations, Chechen suicide terrorists have been more inclined to strike at nearby targets because of close links to their own conflict in Chechnya.<sup>9</sup> Between 2000 and 2005, 50 percent of all Chechen suicide attacks occurred in Chechnya, 21 percent were in the Southern Russia region, and 29 percent were in Moscow. During the same period, 47 percent of Chechen suicide attacks targeted government or military assets in civilian locales, 39 percent targeted Russian military bases, and 14 percent targeted government locations.<sup>10</sup>

In nearly all cases, Chechen suicide bombers did *not* broadcast their intentions beforehand or make statements on behalf of Islam and their people, suggesting that religious zeal and/or martyrdom is not the primary motivation used by most suicide recruiters in Chechnya. In many cases, the underlying motivation — particularly for female suicide bombers — is

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 4–7.

<sup>9</sup>Reuter, John, “Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived?” *The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya*, 16 September 2004, <<http://servizi.radicalparty.org>> (Accessed 21 December 2006).

<sup>10</sup>Anne Speckhard and Khapta Ahkmedova, “The Making of a Martyr,” 6.



revenge. Multiple sources claim that the majority of identified Chechen suicide bombers were victims of Russian ‘counter-terrorist’ operations. These Chechens were not known for religious fundamentalism, for being socio-economically marginalized, or for having homicidal inclinations. In all, despair has been the most common theme underlying the various motivations that drive Chechen-related suicide terrorism. Drugging and hypnosis have also played a role, but to a lesser extent. It is also noteworthy that nearly 70 percent of Chechen suicide attacks have involved women; roughly 50 percent involved women exclusively — the reasons for which are addressed later in this article.<sup>11</sup>

### ***SUICIDE ATTACKS: CHECHNYA VERSUS OTHER REGIONS***

Modern suicide terrorism began in 1963 with Hezbollah attacks in Lebanon. By 1987, the tactic migrated to the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The Palestinian Hamas adopted it in 1993, followed by Turkey’s Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) in 1996, and al-Queda in the mid-1990s.<sup>12</sup> In Chechnya, however, there is no history of suicide bombings prior to 2000. Coupled with Russian brutality, the trend of this tactic since that time stems from the growing militant Wahabbi ideological influence in Chechnya. This influence was facilitated by an influx of mostly Arab fighters from Afghanistan, their foreign money, and their educational materials. The most prevalent version of Islam in Chechnya, prior to this influx, was and continues to be Sufism.<sup>13</sup> The onset of Wahabbist ideology dovetailed

<sup>11</sup> John Reuter, “Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers.”

<sup>12</sup> Anne Speckhard, “Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Counseling Human Bombs and Their Senders,” in *Topics in Terrorism: Toward a Transatlantic Consensus on the Nature of the Threat*, Jason S. Purcell and Joshua D. Weintraub, eds. Atlantic Council Publication 2005, 1–2, <<http://www.annespeckhard.com>> (Accessed 21 December 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Anne Speckhard and Khapta Ahkmedova, “The Making of a Martyr.”

with key elements of Chechen culture, which generally mandates that there is a duty to avenge the deaths of family members.

Traditional Chechen rules for revenge primarily include:

- Murder should be avenged with murder.
- Only males may avenge; females are only allowed to avenge if there are no males in her family and among her relatives.
- For the murder of a female, two males should be killed: the murderer and the murderer's family member.
- The revenge should be directed only at the murderer, not at his family members or close associates.
- Revenge is not limited in time; it can be realized many years after the murder.
- The revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene and ask the victim's family to forgive the murderer.
- Revenge does not mandate that the avenger should kill him/herself while committing the murder.<sup>14</sup>

Today's Chechen suicide bombers often violate these rules. The cultural norm in Chechnya of taking revenge directly upon the perceived offender is influenced by the attacker's experience of overwhelming personal trauma. This is sometimes coupled with the adoption of an ideology (in this case Islamic radicalism and/or Wahabbism) that may promote the killing of innocents to satisfy a desire for vengeance. Studies have shown that most Chechen suicide bombers experience a personality change before their attacks due to a trauma or loss involving the killing, torture, or wounding of a loved one, followed by a strong commitment to a terrorist group that promotes suicide attacks. The perpetrator undergoes significantly altered religious beliefs, as religion helps to overcome the fear of death and brings hope for the future. Despite this religious aspect, political and/or revenging goals have almost always been the top priority of the Chechen suicide bomber. Instead of being the major catalyst for self-sacrifice, Islamic radicalism and/or Wahabbism simply provide a comfortable medium by which the suicide bomber can mentally and spiritually undertake the act.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the experience of overwhelming trauma and a new religious underpinning, there are more differences than similarities between Chechen suicide bombers and their counterparts in other regions (i.e., the

<sup>14</sup>Khapta Akhmedova and Anne Speckhard "A Multi-Causal Analysis of the Genesis of Suicide Terrorism: The Chechen Case," in *Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism*, Jeff Victoroff, ed. 2006, <<http://www.annespeckhard.com>> (Accessed 21 December 2006); also: Zalpa Bersanova, "Values Stronger than War," *Chechnya Advocacy*, 30 July 2004, <<http://www.chechnyaadvocacy.org>> (Accessed 21 December 2006).

<sup>15</sup>Anne Speckhard and Khapta Ahkmedova, *The Making of a Martyr*, 25–32.

Hezbollah in Lebanon, Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, or Hamas in Palestine). For example, in most cultures that host suicide bombings, there is usually strong societal support for the practice. This is not the case in Chechnya. The majority of the Chechen population does not believe that suicide bombers further the well-being of the community. Most Chechens deplore the practice and favor peace over the violent pursuit of national independence. Videos of suicide missions in Chechnya, for example, are not distributed to the Chechen population. This is in contrast to Palestine, Iraq, and similar locations where terrorists share suicide videos with their supporters. Videos of Chechen suicide bombers target only external audiences for recruitment and funding.<sup>16</sup>

There are also significant differences in the reasons for using female suicide bombers in Chechnya versus that in other cultures. In groups such as Hamas, the Tamil Tigers, or the PKK, women are usually engaged in violence only out of necessity or a case of last resort. This is not the case in Chechnya, where even its first suicide bombing — in 2000 — was carried out by two women. Female suicide bombers in other cultures were employed only when male suicide bombers were no longer effective. For instance, Hamas' first suicide bombing (male) occurred in 1993, but it was not until 2002 that it used its first female suicide bomber. This change was prompted by the increasing difficulties that male suicide bombers faced in their attempts to reach their targets. Women traveled with much less difficulty and were less frequently searched. Eventually Palestinian terrorist groups opened their ranks to females, and Fatwas were issued in the Arab world to affirm the practice.<sup>17</sup>

There are further differences regarding the motives for using women in suicide attacks. In a very conservative society, dishonored women (i.e., by rape, promiscuity, inability to have children, etc.) may become excluded from the traditional roles of wife and mother and could face an "honor" killing. Suicide terrorism gives a woman an honorable "way out" of her social problems. However, in most cases the female Chechen suicide bomber does not fit this model. In researcher Anne Speckhard's interviews with the families of Chechen suicide bombers, there were no indications of "suicide terrorism wrapped up with honor suicide." Speckhard concludes that Chechen female suicide bombers are motivated by the same combination of factors that motivate their male counterparts: traumatic experience, severe oppression, and militant Wahabbist ideology.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 11–13.

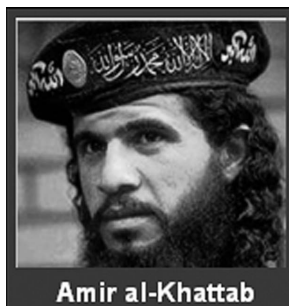
<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 36–47.

<sup>18</sup>Anne Speckhard and Khapta Akhmedova, "Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists, in *Female Suicide Terrorists*, Yoram Schweitzer, ed., Tel Aviv: Jaffe Center Publication, 2006, <<http://www.annespeckhard.com>> (Accessed 21 December 2006).

### **BACKGROUND: RADICAL ISLAMIC INFLUENCE AND TERRORISM IN CHECHNYA**

After the start of the second Russo-Chechen War in 1999, the first Islamic militants began entering Chechnya to take up the “cause” against the Russian infidel. These “mujahideen” offered connections to terrorist financiers beyond Russia’s borders. However, the Islamic fighters held greater aspirations than creating a Chechen state; they promoted a more radical strain of Islam and a desire to install a fundamentalist Islamic republic governed by Sharia law in Chechnya. Conventional wisdom holds that Chechen terrorists tolerated this religious zealotry only to take advantage of the funding and fighters provided by Islamic terrorist organizations.<sup>19</sup>

As the Chechen conflict continued, however, some Chechen separatist groups were actually integrating Islamic goals into their primary objectives, alongside Chechen independence. According to press reports, this was prompted by Amir al-Khattab, who was gaining momentum in his efforts to fund separatism from Moscow, champion Wahhabism, and to facilitate Osama bin Laden’s shared desire to create “one Muslim nation in the Caucasus under fundamentalist rule.”<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, millions of dollars per month were funneled into the region to fund this initiative, and shortly thereafter, Chechens reportedly began receiving terror training in Afghanistan as well as indoctrination of the Wahhabi creed at various “learning centers” throughout Chechnya. Some reports suggest that as many as 1,000 recruits passed through these centers during this time. However, while Chechnya boasts a primarily Muslim population, the populace has demonstrated little allegiance to radical Islam. Today,



<sup>19</sup>“Chechnya,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 22 December 2006).

<sup>20</sup>Amir al-Khattab first arrived in Chechnya from Saudi Arabia in 1995. By the second Chechen war, his religious influence had grown considerably among Chechen separatists.



Chechen resistance groups continue to stress that their primary objective is an independent Chechen state.<sup>21</sup>

Recent reporting suggests that Chechen suicide attacks are decreasing. This may be due to the lack of cultural support that Chechen suicide terrorists receive from their immediate families and Chechen population (Palestinian parents are known to concurrently grieve and take pride in their martyred offspring. Parents of a Chechen suicide bomber do not express this type of “pride.”). Another contributing factor is a general belief among Chechens that resistance to Russian authority is a lost cause. There has also been limited speculation that the influx of money and foreign fighters into Chechnya has significantly dwindled due to resources being funneled to Iraq. Perhaps the greatest blow to the Chechen resistance has been the loss of several high profile leaders, including the July 2006 death of Shamil Basayev, who was generally perceived as the personification of the Chechen resistance by both the Chechen and Russian populations. The net effect of these factors is a belief among some Chechens that suicide bombings will neither deliver the community from oppression nor be a path to personal salvation and glory.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the combination of factors that first led to suicide bombings in Chechnya remains present in the region in some capacity, and one cannot completely discount the potential for Chechen terrorist groups to boost such tactics at home or possibly in more distant locations. The following list includes Chechnya’s key separatist groups, ranging from those most known to conduct suicide bombings to those with little history or evidence of using the tactic.



Shamil Basayev

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

## KEY CHECHEN SEPARATIST GROUPS

### *Black Widows*

The Black Widows are female suicide bombers, usually of Chechen origin, many of whom lost husbands in the Chechen wars against Russia. In the Russian media, the term “Black Widows” has been applied to any female suicide bomber regardless of ethnicity, as fears have increased of ethnic Russians converting to Islam and joining terrorist groups. Although some see the Black Widows as more of an overall phenomenon rather than an organized group, some attacks have been claimed by an entity calling itself the “Black Widows Brigade.” Separatists have convinced many Chechen widows that they have become burdens and that the loss of their husband was a punishment for their sins, leaving suicide bombing as their last resort. Some claim that potential suicide bombers are drugged and coerced into action and that extensive brainwashing techniques have been used on these women.

Much of the Chechen resistance movement has been split on the issue of the Black Widows. Deceased political leader Aslan Maskhadov, who had been acting as Chechen President, had disavowed connections to the Black Widows, although this claim was denied by Russian security officials. Warlord Shamil Basayev, the man responsible for the 2002 Dubrovka Theater siege and the Beslan school massacre, has supported Black Widows’ actions, and has claimed to have personally trained 50 of them.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup>“Black Widows,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 22December 2006). Note: The authors of this article leaned heavily on facts provided by the *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base* — a credible, comprehensive and largely up-to-date databank of global terrorist events and organizations — to document key Chechen terrorist groups known to or capable of conducting suicide attacks.

### ***Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)***

In 1998 Chechen guerilla leader Shamil Basayev and Saudi-born commander Ibn al-Khattab established the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB). Membership is primarily comprised of nationalistic, ethnic Chechen fighters as well as a contingent of Arabs and other foreign fighters who adhere to Islamic extremist doctrine (Wahabbism). The IIPB has maintained operational bases in Chechnya, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, and Turkey. Most attacks are characterized by the use of explosives to kill and/or disable Russian forces, and they are known to have used suicide-related tactics.

Distinct from other Chechen resistance groups, the IIPB's main objective is not only the creation of an independent Chechen state, but one that is governed by Islamic fundamentalist law (Sharia). This is attributed to the influence of the group's commander-in-chief, al-Khattab, and the influx of Arab mujahideen he brought with him from Afghanistan. Additionally, al-Khattab maintained ties with Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, which furnished financial, operational, and military support. Al-Khattab also was able to mobilize militants from Ingushetia, Ossetia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan to help in the fight, while his numerous Gulf and Middle Eastern financial connections proved invaluable in the proliferation of the radical Chechen movement.

To aid in achieving its ultimate objective, the IIPB established training camps in southeastern Chechnya, which trained unemployed young Chechen men and Muslims from throughout Russia for a jihad that was far greater in scope than originally envisioned by Chechnya's nationalist leadership. The IIPB has been credited with a number of attacks against Russian military and civilian targets since 1999, including its part in the



October 2002 seizure of Moscow's Dubrovka Theater. Suicide attackers took more than 900 hostages for three days — demanding the complete withdrawal of Russian security forces from Chechnya — before Russian Special Forces raided the building. The Russian troops killed all the terrorists; over 150 civilian hostages also died during the operation. Amir al-Khattab and his successor were killed in 2002 and 2004, respectively. The group today is led by Abu Hafs al-Urduni and maintains its stated goal of driving Russian forces from Chechen soil.<sup>24</sup>

### *Riyad US-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade*

The Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade is a relatively young terrorist organization, dedicated to the creation of an independent Islamic republic in Chechnya (and other primarily Muslim parts of Russia such as Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia, Ossetia, and Tataria). The group, whose name translates to "requirements for getting into paradise," espouses radical Islamic doctrine (Wahabbism), and is believed to have strong ties to Al-Qaeda. The group has used "Black Widow" suicide bombers to carry out attacks, such as the August 2004 airline and subway bombings.

The primary inspiration behind Riyad's activities is a desire for the independence of "Chechen lands," rather than religious zealotry. Before his death in July 2006, rebel commander Shamil Basayev, who briefly served as President of Chechnya, led the Riyad. Riyad is believed to be descended from two other Chechen terrorist organizations led by Basayev, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR) and the International Islamic Brigade (IIB), and may simply be the result of the marriage of these two groups. Riyad terrorists intensified their attacks for several years, claiming responsibility for some of the worst terrorist incidents in Russia's history. Their first attack, in December of 2002, destroyed the headquarters of the pro-Russian Chechen government, killing 72 and injuring 280 people. According to Basayev, the perpetrators of the attack were an ordinary Chechen father and his two teenage children. A similar attack was made on Russian territory in August of 2003, but this time the target was a hospital housing both civilian and military patients. The attack resulted in the deaths of 52, while injuring 72. While the death of Shamil Basayev in July 2006 is seen as a large setback for the brigades, the group remains an active security threat in the region.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup>"Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 22 December 2006).

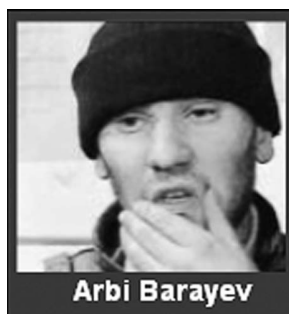
<sup>25</sup>"Riyad Us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 3 January 2007).

### ***Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)***

The Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR) was formed by Arbi Barayev during the inter-war years (1996–1999) of the Russo-Chechen conflict. The group's primary objective is the liberation of Chechnya and the formation of an independent Chechen state. To achieve this goal, Barayev forged alliances with other prominent Chechen resistance organizations as well as foreign Islamic groups. After the start of the second Russo-Chechen War in 1999, SPIR greatly expanded its operations and became a significant force against Russian federal forces. Like the IIPB, SPIR played a significant role in the October 2002 seizure of Moscow's Dubrovka Theater. Changes in leadership have become characteristic for the SPIR. After Barayev's death in 2001, the group experienced a series of new leaders as each predecessor was killed in conflict. The charismatic Amir Kazbek now heads the organization, which continues its primary aspiration of driving Russian forces from Chechnya.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat***

The Dagestani insurgency, lead by Rasul Makasharipov, is now an inseparable part of the conflict in Chechnya and a security threat in the North Caucasus. Formed in 2002 under the name Dzhennet ("Paradise"), Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat is a terrorist group active in the Dagestan region of Russia, with bases of operation in Chechnya. The group's objectives are similar to those of most groups in the region, which include the expulsion of Russian influence from the region, the destruction of all "opponents of Sharia" including moderate Muslims, and the creation of an independent Dagestan under Islamic law. Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat



**Arbi Barayev**

<sup>26</sup>"Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 3 January 2007).

mainly targets political leaders and Russian security forces. In addition to committing terrorist attacks, Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat is active on the propaganda front, often claiming attacks on behalf of other extremist groups, publicizing atrocities committed by Russian special forces in Chechnya, and publicly criticizing Russian policies and commenting on political events, the most recent being the execution of Russian diplomats in Iraq and the Israel-Lebanon War of 2006.<sup>27</sup>

### *Ingush Jama'at Shariat*

The Ingush Jama'at Shariat is a Muslim separatist group comprised of militants from Ingushetia and possibly Chechnya. Their goal, to establish an Islamic state independent from Russia, reflects the common struggle of most militant groups in the Caucasus region. The extremely violent and strict religious language used by the group is representative of militant groups in the region as well. A public statement in May 2006 from Amir Khabibulla, the Ingush Jama'at Shariat's leader, indicates that the group has ties to other active terrorist organizations in Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan. Khabibulla specifically mentioned meeting at one point with the with late Shamil Basayev, leader of the Chechen-based Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade.

Khabibulla claimed a series of arson attacks on homes occupied by "Russian colonists" throughout Ingushetia. These actions were considered retribution for alleged violence and kidnapping carried out by the Russian Army directed at Ingush citizens. He states that as long as the Russian colonization policy in the Caucasus region continues, these types of attacks will become more frequent. On February 27th, 2006, Magomed Chakhkiyev, chairman of the Ingushetian legislature's Committee on Agrarian Policy, was abducted by armed members of the Ingush Jama'at Shariat and held captive for over two months until his release on 5 May 2006. The Ingush Jama'at Shariat has vowed to continue its attacks on "Russian colonists" and pro-Russian officials as long as the federal government rejects its claims for independence in the Caucasus region.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Paul Tumelty, "Chechnya and the Insurgency in Dagestan," Jamestown Foundation, 11 May 2005, <<http://www.jamestown.org>> (Accessed 22 December 2006); also: "Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 3 January 2007).

<sup>28</sup>"Ingush Jama'at Shariat," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 3 January 2007).

**CHRONOLOGY OF KNOWN CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS<sup>29</sup>**

**June 2000** - On 7 June, Chechnya experienced its first suicide bombing when a young woman, Khava Barayeva, drove a truck loaded with explosives through a checkpoint of an OMON (Russian Special Purpose Detachment of Militia) base at Alkhan-Yurt in Chechnya. She detonated her bomb outside the barracks, killing a number of troops. Another “suicide operation” was carried out on 11 June at a checkpoint in Khankala by a former Russian soldier who had converted to Islam and joined the rebels; this explosion killed two OMON officers.

**2, 3 July 2000** - Chechen guerrillas launched five suicide bomb attacks into Russian military and police headquarters and barracks within 24 hours. In the deadliest, at least 54 police troops were killed and 81 wounded at an OMON dormitory in Argun, near capital Groznyy. The Russian Interior Ministry for Chechnya based in Gudermes was targeted twice; six Russian troops were killed. Following one of the bombings, a firefight broke out between Chechen guerrillas and soldiers, killing three soldiers and an unknown number of militants.

**8 December 2000** - 16-year old Mareta Duduyeva attempted to drive a truck laden with explosives into a police station in Groznyy. The vehicle was stopped within ten meters of the police gate after police opened fire at the driver. The driver survived, and during questioning confessed that the widow of a local warlord had hired her.

**24 March 2001** - Three bomb-laden cars exploded simultaneously in three southern Russian towns. There is some disagreement as to whether

<sup>29</sup>Information in this list was researched, checked and compiled from multiple open sources that included any reference to incidents of Chechen suicide attacks. All events listed were double-checked against original, open source Russian central political/military newspapers and journals. Sources included the following:

- “Chechen Suicide Attacks,” *Wikipedia*, <<http://en.wikipedia.org>> (Accessed 22 December 2006);
- *Eastview* online database, <<http://www.eastview.com>> provides original Russian and English language reports from Russian military and central newspapers, journals, etc.;
- Kapusta, Phil, unpublished research on suicide attacks worldwide. LCDR Kapusta was a 2006 School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) student whose cooperation on this topic both confirmed and added to our original baseline of Chechen suicide attacks;
- Reuter, John, “Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived?” *The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya*, 16 September 2004, <<http://servizi.radicalparty.org>> (Accessed 21 December 2006);
- “Terrorist Incident Reports,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 10 December 2006, <<http://www.tkb.org>> (Accessed 22 December 2006).

Photographs: All are from Google Images, <<http://images.google.com>>

this was in fact a suicide bombing. Twenty-one were killed and more than 140 injured.

**29 November 2001** - A young Chechen woman, Elza Gazuyeva, carried out an assassination attempt on the Urus-Martan military district commandant, identified only as General Geydar Gadzhiev, blowing herself up with a hand grenade near a group of Russian soldiers. Gazuyeva had lost a husband, two brothers, and a cousin in the war. Gadzhiev, who was accused of atrocities against civilians by locals, reportedly had personally summoned Elza to witness her husband's and brother's torture and execution.

**5 February 2002** - A 16-year-old girl detonated a small bomb inside of the building of Zavodsky district police station in Grozny. She was the only casualty.

**23–26 October 2002** - Approximately 50 abductors, 18 of them women dressed in black and wearing explosive belts, seized a crowded Moscow theater. This marked the first time in the history of female suicide terrorism that such a team was established, signaling a shift from an individual action to a group structure. Although large-scale operations occurred in the past, only a small number of women had assumed the role of warriors.

**27 December 2002** - Chechen suicide bombers ran vehicles into the republic's heavily guarded government headquarters in Grozny, bringing down the roof and floors of the four-story building. The drivers wore federal military uniforms and carried official passes which allowed them through three successive military checkpoints on their way to the headquarters building; a guard at the fourth and final checkpoint attempted to inspect the vehicles and began firing on the trucks as they drove through the checkpoint toward the building. Chechen officials said about 80 people were killed and 210 wounded; Shamil Basayev claimed responsibility for the attack's planning and execution.

**12 May 2003** - Two suicide bombers drove a truck full of explosives into a government administration and security complex, including republican FSB headquarters, in Znamenskoye in northern Chechnya; about 60 people were killed and more than 250 wounded, including a number of civilians.

**14 May 2003** - During a busy Muslim festival at Iliskhan-Yurt, Chechnya, a female suicide bomber detonated her explosive belt in an attempt to kill Chechnya's Moscow-appointed leader, Akhmad Kadyrov. He survived the attack, but the explosion claimed 16 lives and left 145 wounded. A second female suicide bomber killed only herself in a second blast.

**5 June 2003** - A female suicide bomber ambushed a bus carrying Russian Air Force pilots in North Ossetia, blowing it up, killing herself and 20 others and wounding 14.



**20 June 2003** - In Grozny, a suicide truck bomb—driven by a man and a woman—targeted Russian government buildings, killing eight and wounding 25.

**5 July 2003** - Two young Chechen girls were stopped by security guards at separate entrances outside a rock festival at the Tushino airfield near Moscow, and detonated their explosives, killing 15 people. For many observers, the Tushino suicide attacks appeared out of place. The bombings marked the first time that Chechen separatists had attacked civilians with no apparent motive; there were no demands or political aims, not even a claim of responsibility.

**9 July 2003** - Zarema Mazhikhoyeva, a widow from Ingushetia, was arrested as she walked along 1st Tverskaya Yamskaya Ulitsa on 10 July 2003, carrying a homemade bomb. Mazhikhoyeva said she agreed to be recruited by Chechen rebels as a suicide bomber in exchange for \$1,000 in compensation to her relatives to repay them for jewelry she had stolen from them. When sent to Moscow to carry out her mission, she changed her mind and was trying to get herself arrested by police, she said.

**10 July 2003** - A bomb expert was killed after an apparent mechanical failure prevented a female suicide bomber from detonating her bomb at a downtown Moscow restaurant. The failed attack might be connected to the aforementioned 5 July attacks. The female bomber, Zarema Muzhikhoyeva, was arrested and charged with various counts, including terrorism and premeditated murder. More significantly, her arrest and interrogation uncovered information on some elements of the terror group behind the plot. The 22-year-old woman revealed that her intended target was a MacDonald's restaurant, but she got lost due to her lack of familiarity with the city and eventually entered the closest café, where she tried to detonate the defective bomb and was caught.

**27 July 2003** - Southeast of Grozny, a female suicide bomber detonated her explosive charge at a military base, as the son of Mr. Kadyrov was reviewing troops. *Interfax* News Agency reported that security forces were searching for another female bomber suspected to be on a mission to assassinate Kadyrov.

**1 August 2003** - A suicide bomber driving a truck packed with explosives blew up a military hospital in the town of Mozdok in North Ossetia, bordering Chechnya. The blast killed at least 50.

**15 September 2003** - In Magas, Ingushetia (provincial capital city), a GAZ-53 truck with two suicide attackers drove at a high speed, smashed through a fence, and exploded 15 meters from a Federal Security Service Directorate building. The blast left a crater ten meters in diameter and two meters deep. The blast killed the two attackers and injured 25.

**5 December 2003** - A shrapnel-filled bomb believed to be strapped to a lone male suicide attacker ripped apart a commuter train near Chechnya,

killing 44 people and wounding nearly 200. The explosion occurred during a busy morning rush hour when the train was loaded with many students and workers. It ripped the side of the train open as it approached a station near Yessentuki, 750 miles south of Moscow.

**9 December 2003** - In the center of Moscow, a female suicide bomber set off explosives near the Kremlin and State Duma. The bomber used suicide belts packed with ball bearings to kill six people and injure another 44. Shamil Basayev later claimed responsibility for organizing the December 2003 attacks.

**6 February 2004** - Moscow metro bombing – A bomb ripped through a Moscow metro car during morning rush hour, killing 39 people and wounding 134. A previously unknown Chechen rebel group claimed responsibility for the bombing; the claim came from a group calling itself “Gazoton Murdash,” led by Lom-Ali (“Ali the Lion”). According to the statement, the group launched the attack to mark the fourth anniversary of the killing of scores of Chechen civilians by Russian soldiers who took control of the Chechen capital Grozny.

**6 April 2004** - A suicide car bomber attacked Ingushetia President Murat Zyazikov’s motorcade. Zyazikov, a former KGB general, was only lightly injured; he was saved by the armor plating of his Mercedes-Benz car. Two died and seven were wounded.

**25 August 2004** - Flight #1353 Volga-Avta express and flight #1047 Siberia Airlines crashed nearly simultaneously. Traces of explosives were found in the planes’ wreckage. An Islamic militant group claimed responsibility for the attack-in which 90 people died — in a web statement. The perpetrators, Chechen women Amanta Nagayeva (30) and Satsita Dzhebirkhanova (37), had lived together in an apartment in Grozny and had purchased their tickets at the last minute. Nagayeva’s brother had disappeared three years earlier and the family believed he was abducted by Russian forces.

**29 August 2004** - A man tried to set off a handmade bomb at a polling station in Grozny. A police officer saw a suspicious-looking bag in the hands of the man and asked him to open it. The man then set off the bomb, killing himself.

**1–3 September 2004** - Chechen terrorists took more than 1,200 children and adults hostage in Beslan, Russia (100 km west of Grozny). Some of the terrorists, including women, were armed with suicide “bomb belts.” An estimated 360 persons were killed in the retaking of the school by Russian security forces.

**21 September 2004** - Agents of the FSB security service detained a woman girded with a so-called “shaheed belt” bomb in Chechnya’s Urus-Martan district. The detainee, Natalya Khalkayeva (31), was born in the Limanski district of the Urals’ Kurgan Region. Agents who searched the

woman found a satellite telephone, charging device, and the belt stuffed with a kilo of plastic explosives and wire.

**31 January 2005** - According to a Chechen separatist website, a suicide bomber destroyed three vehicles and killed ten Chechen security service members (according to earlier reports of the Chechen Interior Ministry, a car crash occurred at the highway).

**5 May 2005** - Police killed two female suicide bombers and two field commanders in the settlement of Sernovoskoye, Chechnya. They were supposed to drive a KamAZ truck carrying more than 1.2 tons of explosives.

**8 May 2005** - A female suicide bomber was killed by servicemen of the Akhmat Kadyrov special task regiment, as she was about to blow up the police headquarters in the Staropromyslovsky district. The female suicide bomber was carrying a so-called “shaheed belt” and was planning to enter the police headquarters and blow herself up.

**29 December 2005** - A suicide bomber prematurely detonated his explosives in Makhachkaha, Ingushetia, killing himself and wounding another.

Chechen suicide bombers have a set of motives that differentiate them from those who use this tactic in other regions. These motives — including revenge, the pursuit of national independence, and religion as only a nominal cause — make Chechen militants less likely to employ suicide bombers outside of Russia. Suicide bombings in Afghanistan therefore have little if any relationship with Chechnya, though Islamic militant influences in both regions provide sufficient reason to remain vigilant regarding their potential cooperation. The threat today, however, stems more from the continued influence of Afghan-based Islamic extremist influence in Chechnya than Chechen influence on anti-Coalition operations in Afghanistan.

